

**James Madison to Jonathan Elliott, November, 1827.
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ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,
1900-1910.**

TO JONATHAN ELLIOT. MAD. MSS.

Montpr., Novr..., 1827.

Dr. Sir, I have recd. your letter of the 12th, in which you observe that you are committing to the Press the 2d Vol of Debates in the State Conventions on the question of adopting the federal Constn; that the Vol will include the debates of the Virga. Convention, and you request of me a correct Copy of the part I bore in them.

On turning to the several pages containing it, in the 2d & 3d Vols. of the Original Edition, (the 1st not being at hand,) I find passages, some appearing to be defective, others obscure, if not unintelligible, others again which must be more or less erroneous. These flaws in the Report of my observations may doubtless have been occasioned in part by want of care in expressing them; but probably in part also by a feebleness of voice caused by an imperfect recovery from a fit of illness, or by a relaxed attention in the Stenographer himself incident to long & fatiguing discussions, of his general intelligence & intentional fidelity, no doubt has been suggested.

But in whatever manner the faulty passages are to be accounted for, it might not be safe, nor deemed fair, after a lapse of 40 years, lacking a few months, and without having in the meantime ever revised them, to undertake to make them what it might be believed they ought to be. If I did not confound subsequent ideas, and varied expressions, with the real ones, I might be supposed to do so.

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These considerations induce me to leave my share of those debates, as they now stand in print; not doubting that marks of incorrectness on the face of them will save me from an undue degree of responsibility.

I have never seen nor heard of any publication of the Debates in the 2d Convention of N. Carolina, and think it probable that if

taken down, they never went to the Press.

I am glad to find you are encouraged to proceed in your plan of collecting & republishing in a convenient form, the proceedings of the State Conventions as far as they are to be obtained; and with my best wishes that you may be duly rewarded for the laudable undertaking, I tender you my friendly respects.

Mrs. Madison desires me to express her acknowledgments for the little volume,¹ you politely sent her.

¹ Wanderings in Washington.— *Madison's Note*.